

peace. And I believe the reason why is because democracy has taken hold on that continent. And one of the leading lights of democracy has been Hungary.

We thank the Hungarian people for their example. We thank them for their contribution in helping the newly free in Afghanistan and Iraq realize the blessings of liberty. We thank them for being allies in keeping the peace.

Mr. Speaker, thanks for letting me come by and pay my respects to a strong ally and a good friend but also pay my respects to Congressman Tom Lantos, a person who understands the difference between freedom and tyranny, and a person who is willing to speak his mind all times, all places, everywhere.

God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in Statutory Hall at the United States Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; U.S. Ambassador to Hungary George H. Walker III; and Hungary's Ambassador to the U.S. Andras Simonyi.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of Congress

March 16, 2006

It's been my pleasure to host Republicans and Democrats from both the House and the Senate here to talk about budget reform. We're talking about the way to—for the executive branch and the legislative branch to work in a cooperative fashion to help make sure that the appropriations bills we pass are—meet priorities, that they are—that the process is transparent, that we're able to say to the American people, "We care about how we spend your money."

Part of the budget reform process is a line-item veto. I want to thank the Members here who have come, who have offered not only constructive advice but practical applications of the line-item veto so that it becomes law. And I listened carefully to some constructive suggestions from both Republicans and Democrats as to how to get a piece of legislation passed. The American people expect all of us from both parties to work diligently as to how we spend their money. And one way

that we can earn the confidence of the people is to pass a line-item veto.

And again, I want to thank the Members for being here. It means a lot that people from both parties are here. I particularly want to thank my opponent in the 2004 campaign, Senator Kerry, for being here. I can remember on the campaign trail, he said that he supported a line-item veto, and he is following through on his word by being here at the table. I'm proud you're here, Senator.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Stop Counterfeiting in Manufactured Goods Act

March 16, 2006

Thank you. Welcome. Thanks for coming. In a few moments, I will sign a bill that protects the hard work of American innovators, strengthens the rule of law, and helps keep our families and consumers safe. The Stop Counterfeiting in Manufactured Goods Act has earned broad support, and I want to thank all those who helped get this bill passed for being here today. I want to thank the lawmakers from both political parties for getting this piece of legislation to this desk. I want to thank the consumer protection groups who have joined us as well. Thanks for your hard work on this important piece of legislation.

I want to thank the Attorney General, Al Gonzales, who has joined us; the Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez; my Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao. Thank you all for being here. I appreciate the chairman of the Judiciary—House Judiciary, Jim Sensenbrenner, for joining us today. I also want to thank the bill's sponsor, Joe Knollenberg from Michigan, as well as Bobby Scott from Virginia. Thank you three Members for being here. The Senators claim they're voting on important legislation; otherwise they would have been here too. *[Laughter]*

This economy of ours is strong; it's getting stronger. We grew at 3.5 percent last year. The national unemployment rate is 4.8 percent. People are buying homes. The small-